

beat him to death—one 21, one 18. I was looking at these two kids thinking, you know, they're young enough that they could be my children. And both these young men put on the uniform of our country, and I could have sent them someplace to die. They both swore to go wherever I told them to go and do whatever I told them to do. And I was aching for the young man who had died and for the young man whose life is now destroyed, who wasn't born hating that way; somebody had to teach him to do that.

And so I say to you, you want to know what makes us different? The best politics in 2000 is doing right by the big challenges of the country. If people believe the election is about who's got the best record and who's got the best vision for the big challenges, lifting us up and pulling us together, listen, our crowd's going to do fine.

If we talk about the aging of America and Social Security and Medicare, if we talk about the education of our children, if we talk about growing our economy and helping our agricultural and manufacturing sectors while improving the environment, if we talk about balancing work and family, if we talk about bringing economic opportunity to poor people and getting this country out of debt for the first time since 1835, and if we talk about the most important thing of all, which is manifested in the hate crimes in America and in the continuing conflicts from the Balkans to the Middle East, and thank God, in the peace agreement in Northern Ireland, and we hope there will be one between Israel and Syria soon, because they're coming to meet next week—people have to find a way not just to tolerate but to celebrate their differences, and to be secure in doing it because they believe, down to the core of their being,

that what we have in common is even more important. We've got to let a lot of this stuff go. Our party can take the lead in doing that.

So go out there and talk to people about what's happened in this country in the last 7 years. Even more important, go out there and say, "Do you really believe in our lifetime we've ever been in this kind of shape before? And if you don't, what are we going to do with it?" Go up to total strangers on the street and say, "You're a citizen; what do you think we ought to do with this time? I think we ought to make the most of it." And ask them about the aging of America. Ask them about the children of America. Ask them about their parents struggling to balance work and family. Ask them about the economy and the environment. Ask them about bringing economic opportunity to poor places. And ask them about building one America. You make this election season about that, and we'll have another celebration next year.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:10 a.m. in the Empire Room at the Wyndham Palace Resort. In his remarks, he referred to Charles A. Whitehead, chairman, Florida State Democratic Party; Senatorial candidate Bill Nelson and his wife, Grace; Rhea Chiles, widow of former Gov. Lawton Chiles of Florida; Jeffrey L. Eller, former Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of Media Affairs; Craig T. Smith, former Assistant to the President and Director of Political Affairs; Ward Connerly, chairman, California civil rights initiative; Vinton G. Cerf, senior vice president of Internet architecture and technology, MCI WorldCom, and his wife, Sigrid; and Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research.

Statement on Turkey's European Union Candidacy *December 11, 1999*

It is with great pleasure that I welcome the European Union's offer on Friday to Turkey and Turkey's acceptance of EU candidate status. The United States has long supported Turkey's bid to join the EU, in the belief that this would have lasting benefits not only for Turkey but also for all EU members and the United States.

On Friday the EU and Turkey took a big step toward bringing that goal to fruition.

I would like to congratulate Turkish Prime Minister Ecevit for his government's decision to accept the EU offer. Under Mr. Ecevit, Turkey has launched an impressive array of political, economic, human rights, and other reforms that

demonstrate conclusively its commitment to take its rightful place in Europe.

I would like to express my admiration to Greek Prime Minister Simitis for his statesmanship and groundbreaking efforts with Mr. Ecevit to improve relations between Greece and Turkey, efforts which were key to bringing about this momentous development.

Finally, I want to congratulate all the members of the European Union for their decision and to express my support for their vision of a Europe stronger and more united for its embrace of diversity. In particular, Finnish Prime Minister Lipponen deserves credit for his hard work and skill in helping to bring about this extraordinary achievement.

Remarks at a Reception for Representative Alcee L. Hastings in Fort Lauderdale, Florida

December 11, 1999

The President. Thank you very much. Whoa! You will have to forgive me; you can hear that I have a cold, and so I can't talk very loud. So if you talk, I can't talk. If you like my speech very much, I can't talk, because I can't get over all the cheers. But let me say to all of you, first of all, I want to thank the Keiser family and the leadership of this college for welcoming us here. I want to thank the president of the student body, Dean Samuels, who met me and gave me a gift from the students.

I believe in the audience we have, in addition to Representative Hastings, another candidate for Congress on our ticket in an adjacent district, State Representative Elaine Bloom. I think she's here, and there she is. I want you guys to help her.

Let me say to all of you, I have had a wonderful day in Florida. I don't think I ever had a bad day in Florida. This is the first time I've ever been in Florida in my life that I've been sick, and I had a good day in spite of it, because, this morning, I went up to Orlando to the Democratic State Convention. Now, I attended the Democratic State Convention in Florida in 1981 and in 1983 and in 1987, when I was just a Governor and a friend of your Governor's, and they were good enough to invite me. And I always had a big time, and Hillary had two brothers living down here then, and I was always looking for a reason to come and always learning about what was going on in Florida, and thinking, this is the beginning of what will happen in America.

So, anyway, 8 years ago this week—8 years ago—in December of 1991 Hillary and I came down to the Florida Democratic Convention,

which was holding the first election of the primary season, a straw poll. I was running fifth—fifth—in the country in the primaries at the time, but I got over 50 percent in the Florida Democratic straw poll. And it's been all uphill ever since, thanks to all of you, and I'm very grateful.

Now, I'm glad to be here tonight with Alcee Hastings, and I'll tell you why and ask you to help Elaine Bloom. Because I know the President sometimes gets the blame when things go wrong, but the President also gets the credit when things go right. And you heard Alcee talking about all those good things. I want to run over them again in a minute for you, but the good things that have happened here to the American people would not have happened had I not had the support of the Democrats in Congress, particularly those that were really strong-willed and outspoken, that had influenced the others, and Alcee Hastings is such a leader in the United States Congress.

And I want you to know that his influence extends beyond the Florida delegation, beyond the Congressional Black Caucus, because he is an intelligent man; because he cares about the rest of the world; because he believes that you can care about the education of our children and saving Medicare and Social Security for our seniors and protecting the Florida environment, and still care about decency and humanity all around the world and the end of not only racism at home but racial and ethnic and religious hatred all around the world. He is one of the most exceptional people in the House of Representatives, and I want you to help him.